

1) *The good qualities of the Buddha's body*

Buddhas have eliminated all shortcomings and therefore do not have an ordinary body of flesh and blood. Rather, a Buddha's body is a mental body, that may appear to be of flesh and blood, and that is free from all impurities.

The qualities of the body of the Buddha are usually explained in the context of the presentation of the *kayas*. The original meaning of the Sanskrit word *kaya* (Tibetan: *sku* / pronounced: *ku*) is 'that which is accumulated'. In English *kaya* is translated as 'body'.

However, the *kayas* of the Buddha do not literally refer only to the form aggregate but also to the Buddha himself, to his various attributes, and so forth.

However, for the sake of explaining the qualities of the Buddha's body three *kayas* are particularly relevant:

- (a) the *Jnanakaya* / the wisdom truth body
- (b) the *Sambhogakaya* / the enjoyment body
- (c) the *Nirmanakaya* / the emanation body

The (a) *Jnanakaya* refers to the omniscient, immaculate mental consciousness of the Buddha that directly realizes *all* phenomena.

The latter two *kayas* (the *Sambhogakaya* and the *Nirmanakaya*) are manifestations of the omniscient mind in various forms. The (b) *Sambhogakaya* is the perfect *kaya* in which the Buddha attains enlightenment. It is always present and does not transform into another form. It can only be perceived by Arya Bodhisattvas (Bodhisattvas who have directly realized the ultimate nature of all phenomena) and only teaches Mahayana Dharma.

The (c) *Nirmanakaya* refers to the different emanations of the mental consciousness of the Buddha that can be perceived by ordinary sentient beings and whose only mission is to lead sentient beings to enlightenment. In general, *Nirmanakayas* are explained to be threefold:

1. Artisan *Nirmanakayas* (*bzo bo sprul sku* / *zo wo truel ku*)
2. Incarnated *Nirmanakayas* (*skye ba sprul sku* / *kye wa truel ku*)
3. Supreme *Nirmanakayas* (*mchog gi sprul sku* / *chog gi truel ku*)

1. *Artisan Nirmanakayas*

Artisan *Nirmanakayas* refer to the emanations of Buddhas who are skilled in arts. For instance, the king of artisans named Bisho Karma was particularly skilled in making religious statues and is renowned for constructing the statue of Jowo Rinpoche in Lhasa.

Another example of an Artisan *Nirmanakaya* is the artisan emanated by Shakyamuni Buddha in the form of a lute player in order to tame the king of celestial musicians, Raja Pramudita. King Raja Pramudita was extremely arrogant; he believed that there was no lute player better than him and this attitude became a serious obstacle to his spiritual development. When the king heard the Artisan Emanation Body of Shakyamuni Buddha play the lute, he called him to play for him. The musician removed one of the strings of his lute, and was still able to play as well as before. He continued to remove strings until there were no strings left, but he was still able to play beautiful music. As a result of this the king's arrogance decreased and he became the Buddha's disciple. In fact, he became the last disciple of the Buddha before the Buddha's passing into Parinirvana.

2. *Incarnated Nirmanakayas*

Incarnated *Nirmanakayas* refer to the emanations of Buddhas who take rebirth in various forms in order to benefit sentient beings. They may manifest the aspect of being born as humans, celestial beings, animals, and so forth. However, this category of emanation bodies also includes Buddhas' emanations as bridges, boats, and other inanimate objects.

3. *Supreme Nirmanakayas*

Supreme *Nirmanakayas* are the emanations of Buddhas who manifest the twelve deeds, i.e. who reintroduce the Buddhist teachings and are the so-called 'founding' or 'historical' Buddhas.

Examples of Supreme Nirmanakayas are the present founding Buddha, Buddha Shakyamuni, and the future founding Buddha, Buddha Maitreya. Their bodies are adorned with the 32 major marks and the 80 minor signs; they are radiant and emit golden light. Merely by seeing these bodies, disciples feel calm and inspired to practice the Dharma.

2) The good qualities of the Buddha's speech

The good qualities of Buddhas' speech are also inconceivable. A Buddha's speech is perfectly suited to those who listen to it; it assists their mental development and provides them with whatever they need in order to progress towards enlightenment.

Hearing the words of the Buddha calms those who are worried and in distress, delights those who are depressed and unhappy, and restrains those who engage in reckless behavior.

Whatever the Buddha says is a teaching, it is non-deceptive and free from errors. When different people ask the Buddha different questions in different languages, the Buddha is able to answer all of them simultaneously with a single statement.

The sutra called the **Chapter of the Truth Speaker** says:

It is like this: if all sentient beings simultaneously

Ask questions in different languages

In a single instance he understands them

And with a single utterance gives answers to each.

Therefore, the leader of beings in this world

Has eloquent speech that is a treasury of knowledge

He turns the wheel of Dharma

That eradicates the suffering of humans and celestial beings.

When the Buddha – in particular the Supreme Nirmanakaya – gives teachings it is called 'turning the wheel of Dharma'. The wheel is an ancient Indian symbol. In the Buddhist context the wheel's swift motion symbolizes the rapid spiritual transformation revealed in the Buddha's teachings and as a weapon of change it represents the overcoming of all obstacles and obstructions. Furthermore, the Buddha gives teachings that his disciples put into practice until they attain the same realizations as the Buddha. The disciples then teach the methods for attaining these realizations to others so that the teachings cycle on to bring enlightenment to all sentient beings.

3) The good qualities of the Buddha's mind

The good qualities of the Buddha's mind are explained by way of two aspects:

- i) Knowledge
- ii) Compassion

i) Knowledge

Since Buddhas have eradicated afflictive and cognitive obstructions, their minds are omniscient and directly realize all phenomena; they simultaneously realize the two truths, the subtle working of karma, past and future lives of sentient beings, and so forth.

Therefore, the omniscient mind of a Buddha realizes the sufferings and shortcomings of each and every sentient being as well as the quickest, most effective method for overcoming those.

ii) Compassion

Not only do Buddhas have perfect understanding of all phenomena, they are also completely under the control of love and compassion for all sentient beings. Therefore, they are tied by their great love and compassion, and their only concern is the removal of sentient beings' sufferings and their causes. Even before attaining enlightenment, as Bodhisattvas, they take repeated rebirths in Samsara and live among ordinary living beings in order to benefit them in the most meaningful way.